India have launched a scheme in July, 2000 envisaging distribution of select elven commodities of daily use namely, Arhar Dal, Gram Dal, Malka Red, Urad Whole, Salt, Tea, Toilet Soaps, Detergent Cake, Exercise Notebooks, Edible Oil and Tooth Paste. The State Governments, however, have the option to choose the items as per their requirements/preferences. According to the scheme, these goods will be made available to the consumers irrespetive of their APL/BPL status, in suitable consumer packs, through the existing public distribution system, the Consumer Cooperatives and the State Civil Supplies Corporations or other agencies as may be decided by the respective State Governments. The National Cooperative Consumers' Federation of India Ltd. (NCCF), which is the apex body of consumer cooperatives in the country, has been nominated as the nodal agency to implement the scheme.

(e) The scheme does not envisage any financial assistance/subsidy on the part of the Government.

Rotten Rice for Assam

2681. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Food Corporation of India (FCI) has decided to send 50 thousand metric tones of rice from its depots in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan to Assam;

(b) whether this rice was procured three-four years ago and found to be rotten;

(c) whether the State Government has opposed this move of sending rotten rice to Assam; and

(d) if so, the decision taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) No Sir. FCI has decided to send only a quantity of 13576 tonnes of URS Rice (Rice procured under

Relaxed Specifications) 1998-99 crop year ex-Punjab to Assam against demand of local buyers. This rice has been procured in 1998-99 crop year and is within the PFA Standard Initially, State Government of Assam had unilaterally imposed a ban on supply URS rice without taking cognizance of the quality parameter FCI and this Department suitably intervened in the matter and impressed upon the State Government to lift the embargo on supply of URS rice. This matter has now been resolved and the supply of URS rice has been restored.

(b) to (d) In view of the above, questions do not arise.

Hiring private parties for procurement of foodgrains

2682. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to hire private parties for foodgrains procurement;

(b) if so, reasons therefor;

(c) whether it would not interfere with FCI's mandate; and

(d) whether the role of FCI is sought to be limited to buffer stocking only?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

New Foodgrain Policy

2683. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that his Ministry is seriously thinking of introducing a new foodgrain policy to replace the absolute outlived present policy;